

RECORD ID 92060302

STANDARD NUMBER 1910.1030(b); (c)(2)(i)(B); (c)(2)(i)(C); (a)
INFORMATION DATE 19920603

ABSTRACT

This letter is in response to a request for clarification on Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens regarding janitorial employees. Housekeeping workers in healthcare facilities may have occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Individuals who perform housekeeping duties may be at increased risk for exposure when they perform tasks such as cleaning blood spills or handling infectious wastes. It is the employer's responsibility to determine which job classification or specific tasks and procedures involve occupational exposure. OSHA can determine, on a case-by-case basis, if sufficient evidence exists of reasonably anticipated exposure, the employer will be held responsible for providing protection.

INTERPRETATION

29 CFR 1910.1030(b); (c)(2)(i)(B); (c)(2)(i)(C); (a)

June 3, 1992

Dear Mr. K:

This is in response to your letter of April 29, in which you requested a clarification on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation 29 CFR 1910.1030, "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens". You wrote regarding the coverage of janitorial employees under the standard.

Housekeeping workers in healthcare facilities may have occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, as defined by the standard. "Occupational exposure" is defined as "reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious material which may result from the performance of an employee's duties". Individuals who perform housekeeping duties, particularly in patient care and laboratory areas, may be at increased risk for exposure when they perform tasks such as cleaning blood spills and handling infectious wastes.

While OSHA does not generally consider maintenance personnel and janitorial staff employed in non-health care facilities to have occupational exposure, it is the employer's responsibility to determine which job classifications or specific tasks and procedures involve occupational exposure. For example, OSHA expects products such as discarded sanitary napkins, to be discarded into waste containers which are lined in such a way as to prevent contact with the contents. But at the same time, the employer must determine if employees can come into contact with blood during the normal handling of such products from initial pick-up through disposal in the outgoing trash. If OSHA determines, on a case-by-case basis, that sufficient evidence exists of reasonably anticipated exposure, the employer will be held responsible for providing the protections of 29 CFR 1910.1030 to the employees with occupational exposure.

We hope this information is responsive to your concerns. Thank you for your interest in worker safety and health.